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HOLBERG OG ENGLAND av Viljam Olsvig. Kristiania, 1913, Forlagt av H. Aschehoug & Co. Pp. 346.

During the past twenty years Hr. Viljam Olsvig has published eight works on Holberg, of which the present volume is the last, altho the greater part of it was written at the beginning of the period. After making vain attempts to get a government subsidy the author arranged three years ago for its publication without such public support. Both the author and the publisher are to be heartily congratulated on the make-up of the substantial volume, which is a model both of material and printing. The only serious fault to be found with the book on the side of arrangement is the absence of an index, which would have added materially to its usefulness. This is a negative fault, however, too often found in continental books, for which the system, not the individual author and publisher should be held responsible.

The author has based his study upon a very thoro investigation of his material, his first visit to England having been made as early as 1878. On later visits many months were spent in the Bodleian Library and he has evidently inhaled much of the spirit of Oxford. His references to the English authors in whom he feels that he has discovered influences upon Holberg are very full, tho not always accurate, and he has succeeded in finding many undoubted sources that have been overlooked by earlier students of Danish literature. Having a definite thesis to defend, namely, that the chief foreign influence upon Holberg both as a critical and a creative writer, is English, he has inevitably tried to prove much that will not appeal to the unbiased reader as reasonable. While it is undoubtedly far from the truth to call Holberg, as many have done, the Danish Moliere, it is, in the opinion of the reviewer, equally exaggerated to refer practically the entire inspiration of his political, social and literary views to English sources. The truth lies somewhere between these extremes. Holberg was probably as little a John Bull as a Jean de France and in spite of his undoubted admiration of English institutions and of English literature he realized to a singular degree the ideal of Brand, "at være sig selv nok." But the discussion of Holberg's originality must be left to its proper place, where it is believed that full justice has been given to Olsvig's treatment of the subject.

The book is divided into twelve unnumbered chapters, evenly divided between the treatment of England during the first decade of the eighteenth century, when Holberg spent two and a half years there, and the relation of Holberg to various English authors and institutions. One chapter is devoted to two writers, in whom Olsvig rightly finds especially important suggestions, Addison and Swift. The volume closes with seventy pages of sources, notes, and appendices.

The most interesting, original, and debatable chapter is the ninth, in which the author tries to explain Holberg's apparently deliberate avoidance of references to England before 1743. This discussion is clearly an essential part of the main thesis. If a plausible excuse for ignoring thru a period of many years the influences to which he was most indebted can be furnished, one of the main difficulties is immediately removed. According to Olsvig, this remarkable silence on an important point was a result of the political and ecclesiastical conditions in Denmark during the first four decades of the eighteenth century,

under which everything English was anathema to the ruling classes. Molesworth's unflattering *Account of Denmark* was not yet forgotten and probably contributed not a little to the hostile attitude towards England. The autobiographical letter of 1726 is characterized by Olsvig as "merely an apologetic pamphlet," intended to meet the attacks of his enemies and to prevent their efforts to deprive him of his professorship at the University. Holberg is characterized as follows: "Diplomatic discretion was from his youth the strong side of this artist." Anyone who can say this of the author of *Peder Paars* and the *Danish Comedy* must be singularly lacking in a sense of humor or in discernment of character. It is extremely doubtful if Holberg's contemporaries, especially his opponents, would have endorsed such a view. It would seem to apply about equally well to Björnstjerne Björnson.

It is only fair to state that Olsvig, in spite of his apparent efforts to exaggerate Holberg's indebtedness to English writers, recognizes fully the essential originality of Holberg's genius. He even goes so far as to contradict the statement made in the introduction to an English translation of *Niels Klim* that that work is "an obvious imitation of the *Gulliver* of Swift and cannot therefore claim the praise of original invention" and claims that "it is merely the frame for which Holberg is indebted to Swift. The object of the satire and the material are not an imitation of *Gulliver*, and even the framework is so little imitative that there is not a single feature common to the two works. Holberg's invention of the character *Klim* and his experiences is entirely original . . . the work of his imagination." This view of Holberg's originality, as applied to a single work, is eminently sound and it should be borne in mind when the author seems to go too far in pressing his claims of English influences.

Less sound, in the reviewer's opinion, is the view of the influence of English upon Holberg's Danish. While Holberg admits himself that his Danish speech was somewhat affected by his long-continued use of English, it cannot be accepted as in any way certain that "in 1708 Holberg spoke English with greater confidence and purity than he could speak or write Danish in the immediately succeeding years." It is at least suspicious that the only English phrase quoted from Holberg, "He looks as an Englishman," (p. 95) is markedly unidiomatic, showing that on that occasion Holberg was thinking in Danish. The temporary contamination of his Danish speech may be compared to a statement made by a later consummate master of Danish prose, Dr. Georg Brandes of the effect upon his style of his long stay in Germany. While it is a familiar fact that Holberg's language shows frequent traces of his Norwegian origin, just as a Scotchman seldom writes English entirely free from Scotticisms, it is going too far to say that it developed into "a Norwegian-Danish, . . . a Skagerack-Danish, or Bergen-Danish." The author should have stopped with his first more moderate phrase. He seems to protest too much.

An interesting feature of the book is the translation of the long treatise "Concerning Certain European Peoples," which formed about a fifth of the third *Latin Epistle*, published in 1743, but which Olsvig believes was written not later than 1728 and probably in 1727. This is claimed to be the first complete and accurate translation of the treatise. It is, in the main, a eulogy of the English people, largely at the expense of the French, and its significance in connection with the author's main thesis is evident. It need hardly be added that due emphasis is given to it.

In a work containing so many references to persons and books it is unavoidable that some errors and inaccuracies should appear, especially when most of the references are in a foreign language. It is evidently merely a slip when Archbishop Laud is referred to as Henry the Eighth's prime minister or when the date of the *Fairie Queen* is given as 1690. Sir Philip Sidney's dates should be 1554-86, not 1534-86, p. 330. Defoe was born in 1660 or 1661, not 1663, and the collected edition of his works appeared 1840-41, not 1741. Burnet's *History of my own Time* was published 1723 and 1734, not 1724, and the third volume of the *History of the Reformation* appeared in 1714, not 1715. Some other similar errors were noted, but under the circumstances, the number is not excessive and in no case do they seem to have any special significance.

In conclusion the reviewer, while not accepting *in toto* the general conclusions of the author and in many of the details disagreeing wholly with him, cannot refrain from expressing the opinion that students of Holberg cannot fail to profit greatly from a careful reading of this contribution, which is so evidently a work of love. Let each accept what he can, with the assurance that what he rejects will not do him any harm, while what he accepts may do him much good.

DANIEL KILHAM DODGE.

University of Illinois.

GUSTAF CEDERSCHIÖLD: FRESTA DUGER JÄMTE ANDRA UPPSATSER. Stockholm, 1914. P. A. Norstedt och Söners förlag. Pp. 257.

As one of the most genial and most successfully popular collections of studies on linguistic, literary, and historical subjects, I take particular pleasure in calling attention to this volume by Gustaf Cederschiöld. There are in all twenty-four studies; of a number of these the chief object is to give in a form intelligible to the general reader the results of recent technically scientific works on the subjects treated. The book takes its name from the first study, *Fresta duger*; this and the ten following studies deal with the Swedish language, chiefly with the question of how best to enrich Swedish by the recognition and general use of words not generally known or used (words used by modern authors, in the dialects, archaic words), and how to replace unnecessary foreign words by better native ones. Professor Cederschiöld announces that he is engaged in writing a book on this subject. The second study, *Internationell svenska och folklig svenska*, contains illustrations in parallel columns of passages in Swedish newspaper style effete with loan-words and the same paraphrased into native Swedish. Then there follow: *Duger "ovacker?"*, *Sammansatta substantiv med adjektiv till förled*, *Dvandva-sammansättningar i nutidssvenska*, *Imperativiska substantiv*, *Slang* (based on the material in Wilh. Uhrström's recent book *Stockholmska*), *För riksspråket nya verb, som bildats genom avledning*.

In the study *Hemvant och främmande i nominalböjningen* the conclusion is reached that it is the less common adjectives of certain types that do not have the indefinite neuter form, this being due largely, perhaps, to the difficulty in association with the common-gender form on account of change in vowel quantity (as in *flat*, *flatt*, *god*, *gott*); he points out, further, that an adj. n. form like *frott* could be associated with any of the common-gender forms *fro*, *frod*,